Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991

663. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state :

(a) whether the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1991 is going to expire in September, 1997;

(b) whether the Government are aware that the Act is undemocratic and ruthless due to which the consumers and traders face great difficulties;

(c) whether the Government have received representation from some Members of Parliament as well as from "Federation of All India Foodgrains Dealers Association", Delhi that the period should not be extended;

(d) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto, and

(e) the steps taken/proposed to be taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) and (c). Representation are received from time to time from Members of Parliament and trading community for repealing the Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act, 1981. It is stated in these representations that this Act was promulgated when there was an acute shortage of foodgrains in the country and that as at present, there is no shortage of any essential commodity in the country, there is no need for the Act.

(d) and (e). The Essential Commodities (Special Provisions) Act was promulgated to enable the State Governments to ensure quicker disposal of cases under Essential Commodities Act, 1955 in the Courts and also to take stringent punitive action against the offenders. Its further extension or otherwise will be decided in due course in consultation with the State Governments/UT Administrations.

[Translation]

Cooperative Sugar Mills in Maharashtra

664. SHRI BHIMRAO VISHNUJI BADADE : Will he Minister of FOOD be pleased to state :

(a) the number of Co-operative Sugar Mills unctioning in Maharashtra and the number out of them which are financially sound;

(b) the number of mills against whom the Government loan is outstanding;

(c) the reasons for difference in the prices of ugarcane paid by the sugar mills to the farmers at various places though the expenditure incurred by the farmers on production of sugarcane is same at various places;

(d) whether the Government propose to ensure payment of equal price for the sugarcane by all sugar mills to all sugarcane growers at the various places; and

(e) if so, the details in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FOOD AND MINISTER OF CIVIL SUPPLIES, CONSUMER AFFAIRS AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI DEVENDRA PRASAD YADAV) : (a) In the state of Maharashtra, there are 106 installed sugar factories in the cooperative sector out of which 104 mills were functioning during the season 1995-96 (Oct. to 1995 to Sept. 1996). Central Government does not maintain statistics relating to financial soundness of sugar mills.

(b) Out of the sugar mills in the country, there is only one sugar mill in Maharashtra (Jijamata SSK Ltd shakarnagar, Distt. Puldana) against whom Central Government loan is outstanding.

(c) The Central Government notifies the zonewise statutory minimum prices payable for sugarcane relating to each sugar season. Some of the State Governments advise higher prices for sugarcane.

(d) There is no such proposal under consideration at present.

(e) Does not arise.

[English]

Scam in NDMC

665. SHRI JAI PRAKASH (Hardoi) : Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state :

(a) whether the CBI has unearthed a multicrore embezzlement scam in the New Delhi Municipal Council;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the action taken by the Government therein;

(c) whether there is any proposal to evaluate the working of the Council to find for itself as to the number of other departments where such conditions prevail;

(d) whether there are hundreds of shops in the NDMC markets that need to be regularised and even the monthly licence fee is not being taken from many of them; and

(e) if so, whether there is any proposal to enquire into the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR) : (a) and (b). The requisite information is given in the attached statement.

(c) The New Delhi Municipal Council has recently appointed a Chief Auditor under section 33 of the New